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President's Forum

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PRESIDENT'S FORUM



Creating a Thousand-Ship Navy

DEBATES ABOUT THE NUMBER and types of ships needed in the American navy have been going on since before we even had a country! Heated discussions on the purpose and size of a navy took place at meetings of the Continental Congress in 1775, and the Congress ultimately authorized the construction of only two armed sailing ships. Similar debate continues to this day. The high cost of shipbuilding and the need to balance land, sea, and air forces have driven the active fleet to below the three-hundred-ship level. In such an environment, how could we ever realize the “thousand-ship navy” demanded to meet most challenges to global maritime security? We can get there by assembling a global fleet of capabilities through active partnerships with friends and allies around the world.

In his remarks to Naval War College students in August 2005, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Mike Mullen, noted that the time has come for the U.S. Navy to look at seapower as a team effort, not just with the Marine Corps and Coast Guard but also with international maritime partners, based upon shared objectives and relationships built on trust and confidence. He noted, “As we build upon ideas like Theater Security Cooperation, the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Regional Maritime Security Initiative, we find that every nation has a stake in security, and a distinct, unique capability—as well as a great desire—to contribute.”

He further advanced his vision with the 148 delegates from seventy-five nations who attended the Seventeenth International Seapower Symposium hosted in Newport in September 2005 and during the Secretary of the Navy's Current Strategy Forum held at the College in June 2006, where he called for a “thousand-ship navy” composed of ships from navies around the world that were prepared to cooperate and operate routinely with one another. A key to enabling such

cooperation is naval leaders who are knowledgeable of the regions and sensitive to the cultures of both friends and any adversaries intent on undermining security in the global maritime domain. The Naval War College is playing a major role in developing the competencies of the men and women from the United States and around the world who will help conceptualize, build, and operate this navy.

Building Foundations for Engagement and Global Maritime Security

Beginning with the 2006–2007 academic year, all of our educational programs at the primary, intermediate, and senior levels will meet the requirements recently established by the Chairman of the Joint Staff for regional expertise and cultural awareness. This focus was included as a key element of the new Primary Professional Military Education (PME) course that we launched in May 2006. Our restructured intermediate-level and senior-level PME curricula, which came online last fall, also incorporate significant new content. The new curricula have been developed with regional expertise and cultural awareness as persistent themes throughout both intermediate-level and senior-level programs. Regionally focused sessions have increased from 13 percent to 34 percent in our National Security Decision Making curriculum; a new course theme on “Culture & Societies” has been added to the Strategy & Policy curriculum; and the Joint Military Operations curriculum has been redesigned to—among other things—require students to use regional expertise and cultural skills in a five-week series of application exercises. Changes will also be reflected in our nonresident programs, with full implementation in the intermediate-level nonresident programs by the 2007–2008 academic year. Students will be exposed to regional issues in each of the world’s five major regions. We expect that our students in both the intermediate-level and senior-level courses will be able to:

- Describe U.S. national security interests in one or more countries in each region
- Describe most elements of culture, geography, government, recent history, current economics, and religion of one or more countries in each region
- Describe in detail some of the military elements of doctrine, organization, training, equipment, logistics, history, and traditions of one country in three of the world’s regions.

To develop regional expertise further, many students may choose to use the 20 percent of the academic workload that constitutes their electives program to study in one of five areas of concentration:

- Asia-Pacific
- Latin America/Western Hemisphere

- Africa
- The Greater Middle East
- Eurasia.

Students in these regional studies tracks will complete a total of ninety hours of classroom work supplemented by a twelve-to-fifteen-hour colloquium across the academic year. Each colloquium will be led by a practitioner/scholar who is a preeminent expert in the particular region. The Navy is establishing Additional Qualification Designators, which will be recorded in service records to identify graduates with this level of regional expertise and cultural awareness so they can eventually be assigned to billets where they can best leverage this education and experience. All U.S. military students will be eligible to enroll in one of these tracks beginning in the fall.

Expanded International Programs

We are now seeing the results of efforts made recently to increase the impact of our resident international programs. Annual enrollment in our Naval Command College (our senior-level international course) has expanded from thirty-nine students to fifty-two, and the U.S. students in each class are now screened and selected by the Chief of Naval Operations. The intermediate-level Naval Staff College (NSC) now offers a ten-month course that is fully integrated with the American students' College of Naval Command and Staff program. This ten-month course complements the more traditional five-month NSC program, which continues to be offered in the spring of each year. Taken together, these initiatives now provide opportunity for nearly 150 students annually, an increase of over 80 percent over the throughput of just five years ago. The objective of these programs remains building trust and confidence between our international partners. We will also seek to improve the command-and-control effectiveness of senior officers from the United States and partner nations, by offering in the fall of 2006 a flag-level Combined Force Maritime Component Command course, modeled on our successful Joint Force Maritime Component Commander course. A dozen flag officers from partner nations within specific regions will join with a dozen American flag and general officers in a week-long seminar focused on identifying and eliminating barriers to effective operations among friends and regional/coalition partners.

Global Engagement beyond the Classroom

Newport has been the site of the semiannual International Seapower Symposium for a half-century. The ISS brings together service chiefs and war college presidents of over seventy-five navies and coast guards for wide-ranging discussions of issues of mutual interest. Recognizing that most graduates of our

international programs become admirals—and that many (currently forty-two) become chiefs of their navies—a recent initiative seeks to build upon these relationships and those themes developed during ISS by hosting regional symposia with alumni in various parts of the globe. In October 2005, a conference was held in Yokosuka, Japan, for over forty alumni from throughout Asia; over two dozen European and African alumni came together in Naples, Italy, in April 2006 at a similar conference to address many of the issues of concern to navies in Europe and Africa.

Our five regional studies groups continue to expand their reach and impact. Through alignment with the major Department of Defense regional security centers, such as the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies and the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, our regional studies groups collaborate on curriculum development and sponsor symposia, conferences, lectures, and war games. The college has also recently established the China Maritime Studies Institute, to contribute to the body of knowledge about maritime activities of the People's Republic of China, through analysis of open-source documents and databases.

I am particularly excited about the potential in our effort to expand relationships with war colleges and service academies around the world. Formal agreements on curricula, faculty, and student interaction now exist with the Maritime Staff College in Japan, the Russian Kuznetsov Academy, and the Joint Services Command and Staff College in the United Kingdom. We have just (in August) concluded the first of a series of five war games—designed to address issues of maritime security—with staff of the Kuznetsov Academy. Earlier this year we conducted what has become an annual two-week war game with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force; it included over fifty midgrade and senior Japanese officers who, with U.S. Pacific-theater counterparts, worked through a demanding scenario focusing on operational issues important to both navies. Discussions are ongoing with the leadership of eight other institutions, and agreements will likely be signed in the next twelve to eighteen months.

These “college-to-college” relationships are powerful tools in our ongoing efforts to learn *from* one another and *with* one another on issues of mutual concern. We are aided in these initiatives by the remarkable bond of brotherhood that exists among all mariners around the globe. We all share centuries of seafaring tradition and history, and our mutual respect for the sea and for each other helps us begin to operationalize the thousand-ship navy.

Professional Reading

Regional expertise and cultural awareness will also be enhanced Navywide through portions of the soon-to-be-launched Navy Professional Reading

Program. This innovative program will identify sixty books of particular value for sailors in all ranks, and it will make these books readily available in ship and station libraries around the world. The books have been arranged in categories that relate to important competencies that all Navy personnel will need to master for success in the future. The category entitled "Regional and Cultural Awareness" contains both fiction and nonfiction books that address regional/cultural themes. Books in this category include *The Great Wall at Sea: Modernizing China's Military*, *The Fate of Africa*, *Recognizing Islam*, *The Crisis of Islam*, *The Sand Pebbles*, *The Kite Runner*, and *A Passage to India*. Sailors who take the time to read such books will come away with an increased level of knowledge of and sensitivity to issues related to these regions and the cultures of some of the world's largest populations.

As you can see from the initiatives outlined above, the Naval War College is increasingly playing the role envisioned for it by its founders over 120 years ago. Alfred Thayer Mahan's seminal work *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* was written as "an examination of the general history of Europe and America with particular reference to the *effect of sea power* upon the course of that history." Mahan clearly recognized that what happens at sea has great impact on affairs ashore and that mariners throughout history have had great impact on the outcome of world events. The Naval War College, through its many efforts focused on global engagement, seeks to help the U.S. Navy and its partners realize the thousand-ship-navy concept and ensure global maritime security, as well as the economic stability, prosperity, and peace it underpins.

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